

there for five years tells me the villagers wore their "gace" outside the boots for the most part. Our folk-dancers are not carrying out the idea that these particular costumes are overwhelmingly red. The main ornamentive item is the "lajbek" or vest. If one starts with the blue wool or felt vest and wishes to put red on, then almost completely blot out the blue. Particularly, if you wish to match up the Sestine costumes of white and red worn so much by folk Dance women in these parts.

My correspondents tell me that the vest which is so evident in so many other communities of Croatia is only a deep-blue or solid red occasionally. The vest is double-breasted in that buttons and button-holes appear on both sides of the vest. Metallic buttons (pewter or nickel) and mother-of-pearl buttons are considered authentic. But the only trim is piping on the vest pockets or finishing off the button-holes. The true vest idea of about a "centimeter or two" slant in the vest-front bottom is carried out. But please, please, please . . . our folks don't know in-between colors . . . the blues are deep (no pastels) and the reds extremely rich.

However, my principal observation in folk-dancer men's costumes is the sparsity. In the Zganec-Sremec book, "Croatian Songs and Dances" the pictures throughout show the fullness and there appears this quote: ". . . always put together with the weave running straight and nowhere are there traces of a particular pattern, cut, or curve." The squareness is carried to the point of a "folder Diaper" effect inserted in the sleeve-point of my own shirt (kosulja) and crotch in the loose trousers (gace). The fullness is throughout, not only in the puffed sleeve . . . the trousers are gathered at the waist with a drawstring. There are no buttons on the pants or shirt; collar held together with red bow-tie and sleeves with string through holes and tied in a bow.

The only comment I'll make about women's costumes is that fact that our folk dancers seem to be overlooking the grace of the Konavle costumes, the elaborate pleats and gathers of the Posavski, and the lace and frills of the Slavonian areas costumes.

About dancing, I'll be very short . . . forget about "break-down" and step-counting . . . feel and style are the watch-words. Particularly since there will be new concepts in kolo emanating from the Los Angeles area. We are now working with Sdenka Politeo of San Pedro, who danced with that prize-taking ensemble from Zagreb for about eight years.

Sincerely yours,

TONY BAZDARICH

Director, St. Anthony Kolo Group
Los Angeles, Calif.

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American "Croats" seem to favor this costume. The above picture of young "Hrvats" in holiday mood was taken in Jugoslavia.

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CROATIAN FOLK ART

(The following article was written for Viltis by a Croatian correspondent of one of our local ethnic dance groups. This folk arts scholar's English is self-taught and this article appears with but a word or two changed here and there.)

In the early Middle Ages the Croatian people had shown their ability for the artistic works. Beautiful sculptures and frescoes, miniatures, gold and silver treasures from that age are documents of great sense of beauty.

But then came the invasion of the Asiatic nomads which stopped this cultural progress, forcing the people to the secular struggle for the bare existence. Austria and Venetia, invited as allied powers, developed into oppressors and tyrants to the remainder of the national territory, which even under their domination endeavoured to maintain a relative freedom. In this hard struggle for about 500 years, the artistic genius of the people could not easily find an outlet or develop individual talents, and generally it expressed itself in the collective means of folk art.

Individual artistic creative work continued even in those conditions, mostly on the Adriatic coast, where poets like Marulic, Gundulic, Drzic and other contemporaries of Shakespeare and Milton gave works of great artistic value. Musicians from Jarnovic (1745-1804) till Balokovic, painters and sculptors from Clovio and Laurana in the Renaissance till Mestrovic* show clearly how much a little people can give to culture and art, even handicapped with the secular struggle for existence.

Collective expressions of artistic genius in the innumerable epic and lyric songs, melodies, dances, and costumes

show a richness of esthetic feeling and realization. Very early this folk art impressed those who got acquainted with it. Petar Hektorovic, our poet from Hvar (Dalmatia) in his idyllic poem "Ribanje" (Fishing), printed in 1568, included some epic and lyric folk songs, two of them with musical notes. About this time and later on we find many musical collections of church songs and other folk songs.

The systematic reasearch of these folk songs from the musical viewpoint started with F. Kuhac (1834-1911). He printed about 2,000 folk melodies in five books. His work was continued by many Croatian and some foreign musicians, until there are now about 6,000 folk songs printed and about 5,500 in manuscript.

The Institute for Folk Art in Zagreb took the task of systematic and scientific editing of the material already collected. There are still many beautiful old songs being passed along by the people, and often newer ones crop up. The researchers of the institute and other musicians are collecting these songs continually in writing and on recording tapes during the festivals of the Peasant Union or traveling in the country.

Croatian folk songs and dances show some special musical characteristics. A great part of them is not based on the musical modes of the classical musical theory. Very interesting songs and dances are based on the so-called "Istrian scale", and there are many based on the old church modes, while many others show by some signs that they developed from some church mode, too. (For more about it see Zganec-Sremec: "Croatian Folk Songs and Dances", Zagreb, 1951—Text with English translation)**. These characteristics give the songs and dances a particular charm and beauty.

A great part of Croatian folk songs is sung by the dancers as an accompaniment of the dance, with or without instrumental accompaniment. There are, however, many dancing melodies performed on the folk instruments only: dvojice (shepherd's flute), sopele (a sort of clarinet), gajde (bagpipes), lijerica (a sort of primitive violin), and tambure (like mandolin and guitar orchestra).

The basic form of almost all Croatian dances is a sort of round dance: kolo. There are many sorts of Kolos, and even in one Kolo there are often various steps and figures bordering sometimes on ballet virtuosity. The variety of the movements and their vivacity gives to the Croatian Kolos a peculiar charm, so they became popular not only in our country but in some other ones.

Dancing and singing is a part of actual life in the village, and not only something to amuse oneself or to show off. But there are many city folklore groups performing authentic songs and dances with great success at home and abroad. And the musicians seek inspiration in the folk songs and dances for their works, from short pieces, vocal or instrumental, up to the ballets, operas, and symphonies that have aroused great interest in many countries.

The Croatian people's sense of beauty shows too in the beautiful costumes, which can be often fully appreciated in the dancing movement whence they give an additional charm. These costumes are mostly all hand-made from home materials, and so in many places they are gradually substituted by cheaper and more easily made modern dress. In some parts of the country costly costumes are worn only on festivals or some special occasions, but there are still many other places, where folk costumes are in daily use. This is not only so in some backward and out-of-the-way villages. There are many places near big towns where people stubbornly keep to their costumes, particularly women. But these costumes are really very adapted to their way of life and quite nice to see.

As for the costumes, there are three main types, accord-

ing to the geographic and economic regions of Croatia: the Panonic plains, the Adriatic coast, and the Dinaric highlands. In these regions—on the basis of very ancient types of dress, dating even before the arrival of the people in these parts—the people have created costumes with special esthetic character. The in-weaved or embroidered ornaments, during the long tradition, have developed into a fine harmony of color and form.

Besides the dresses, the folk art manifests itself in many objects of everyday life which are adorned with rich and tasteful ornaments.

Thus, Croatian folk art with the songs, dances, costumes, and other objects constitutes a precious heritage. The people love it and will endeavour to preserve and develop it. The other nations also can find in it an esthetic pleasure and often an inspiration for artistic development.

(* Ivan Mestrovic, eminent contemporary sculptor, now at Syracuse University.)

(** Available at Slav-Art Music Company, Oakland, Cal.)

THE KRSNA SLAVA, SYMBOL OF SERBIAN FAMILY UNITY

JOHN FILCICH

As eagerly as children the world over await Christmas, so does the Serbian family await its Krsna Slava (Kerrs-nah slah-vah) or celebration of the family's patron saint. While many Christians have patron saints, i. e. the saint whose name one bears, it is only the Orthodox Serbian family which has had an individual saint to guide it through the centuries, and to that family falls the honor and duty to commemorate and observe its patron saint on his feast day each year.

As in the cases of many other Christian customs, the Krsna Slava can be traced to pagan times. The Slavs in primitive times worshipped Nature in its various forms—the elements, seasons, and harvest—and each family dedicated certain days of each year to its deity. The word "krsna" refers to "baptismal" and "slava" is from "slaviti", "to glorify, give honor". The modern custom commemorates the acceptance of Christianity, each family having been baptized at different time of the year. Somewhere between the time of embracing Christianity and the fateful battle of Kossovo the head of each early family chose a saint from the calendar (possibly the one whose name he bore) and that saint has been with his descendents to this day. Favorite family patron saints are St. George, St. Nicholas, St. Steven, and St. John the Baptist. It is up to the head of each family to insure the perpetuation of the ancient custom.

Generally, the festivities are spread over three days, as it is the custom for the Slavs, especially the Serbians, to prolong all their holidays to three or more days. Symbolic of the sacred nature of the Krsna Slava is the large candle (similar to the Paschal candle) which burns throughout the celebration in honor of the patron saint. On the eve of the first day, the candle which burned the previous year is lit once again and from its flame is lit the new candle. The candle is revered and considered a holy article; it can only be extinguished ceremoniously with bread and wine, after which the wine glass is offered to all members of the family in commemoration of the event. (The holy connotation of wine to the Blood must be remembered here.)

On the first day, the day upon which the feast of their saint falls, the mother prepares a bowl of "zito"—boiled wheat seasoned with ground walnuts and sweetened with sugar—and the father as head of the family takes it to the